

Ralston School  
625 South American Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1614

HABS  
PA,  
51-PHILA,  
334-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

PHOTOGRAPH

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE PENNSYLVANIA	COUNTY PHILADELPHIA	TOWN OR VICINITY PHILADELPHIA
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) RALSTON SCHOOL		HABS NO. PA-1614
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 625 South American Street at northeast corner of Bainbridge Street		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1869 (date stone)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Lewis H. Esler (published plan of school, 1925)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Fine example of post-Civil War public school house continuing the earlier modular plan of Samuel Sloan's "Philadelphia Plan." The "Philadelphia Plan," developed in the 1850s, provided wide, safe front and rear exits and movable partitions for flexible teaching spaces.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick bearing walls.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) 60'x50' with two story lateral addition on east end, two stories, hipped roof with cross-gables; rectangular plan with four rooms per floor and front and rear entrances and stairs.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Segmental-arch windows, ventilator oculus in gable, name and date stone on south end.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) "Philadelphia Plan" schoolhouse with four rooms to a floor and front and rear entrances and stairs. See photograph PA-1614-1.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Factory addition (Permit No. 1502, March 1, 1928), brick, 60'x25', two story, concrete footing on stone foundation, 13" and 18" brick walls; slag roof; steel columns, girders and ties. Architect: Francis P. Canavan.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Commercial.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE George H. Brinkworth, original contractor; Charles F. Clark, contractor for addition. Ralston School was named in honor of Robert Ralston, prominent mid-19th century merchant. Certified, Philadelphia Historical Commission, 1973.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Franklin Davenport Edmunds, <u>The Public School Buildings of the City of Philadelphia from 1868 to 1874</u> (Philadelphia: the author, 1925), pp. 21-24. Harold N. Cooledge, "Samuel Sloan and the 'Philadelphia Plan'," <u>JSAH</u> , Oct. 1964, pp. 151-54.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Richard J. Webster, author of <u>Philadelphia Preserved</u> , pp. 157, 185.		DATE 1974